Purchase of ammunition from Hongkong

†1803. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Rashtriya Sahara of dated 2nd November, 2001 under the caption "Hongkong se ghatia gola barood kharida sena ne".

(b) if so, whether the Government have decided to get this matter investigated by the CBI; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. There was no such news-item in the Rashtriya Sahara of 2nd November, 2001.

(b) and (c) The case was referred to CBI for investigation on 20th April, 2000. A First Information Report was filed by the CBI on 27.7.2001 against the vendor and officers of Ministry of Defence who had handled this case.

Replacement of INS Vikrant and Viraat aircrafts

1804. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Navy is feeling a pressing need for replacement of INS Vikrant and Viraat aircrafts;

(b) whether it is also a fact that upgradation and indigenisation of these aircrafts are only alternative for them; and

(c) if so, what step are being taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) After the decommissioning of INS Vikrant in 1997, presently, only one Aircraft Carrier *viz.* INS Viraat is in

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.